

24. (New) A latch assembly, comprising:

a latch;

an actuator assembly operatively coupled to the latch, comprising

an actuator drivingly connected by a transmission path to an output member, said actuator being operable to apply a force in a first direction to drive said output member in the first direction from a rest condition to an actuated condition, and also being operable to apply a force in a second direction to drive said output member in the second direction from said actuated condition to said rest condition; and

an energy storing member, in which movement of said output member by said actuator in said first direction is assisted by said energy storing member and movement of said output member by said actuator in said second direction stores energy in said energy storing member.

25. (New) The latch assembly of claim 24, wherein the actuator assembly releases the latch.

26. (New) The latch assembly of claim 24, wherein the actuator assembly latches the latch.

27. (New) A method of operating a latch assembly having an actuator assembly operatively coupled with a latch and having an actuator, an output member, and an energy storing member, comprising:

driving the actuator to apply a force in a first direction to drive the output member in the first direction from a rest condition to an actuated condition;

applying a stored energy force from the energy storing member in the first direction to assist the actuator in driving the output member in the first direction;

driving the actuator to apply a force in a second direction to drive the output member in the second direction from the actuated condition to the rest condition;

storing energy in the energy storing member when the actuator applies the force in the second direction; and